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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000100

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STATE FOR EUR/NCE AND S/ES-O
NSC FOR DAMON WILSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/24/2010

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM PINR LO

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS TO BE HELD JUNE 17; NEW MINISTERS OF
JUSTICE, INTERIOR AND EDUCATION

REF: BRATISLAVA 00099

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)
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¶1. (U) Summary. Following yesterday's decision of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) to leave government and join the opposition (Reftel), Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic accepted the resignations of the KDH Ministers of Justice, Interior and Education, and appointed the former State Secretaries of the same Ministries to take their positions. Separately, the Minister of Health survived a previously scheduled vote of confidence. Post expects that the government as now constituted will be able to maintain power until elections, which will be held June 17, pending February 9 Parliamentary approval. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The new Minister of Health is Laszlo Szigeti, a deputy Chairman of the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK). The new Minister of Education is Martin Pado, a member of the Prime Minister's Social and Democratic Union Party (SDKU). The new Minister of Justice is Lucia Zitnanska, who does not belong to any political party, but who was nominated to her former position as State Secretary of the Justice Ministry by KDH. Please change State Department's records accordingly.

¶3. (U) The Minister of Health, Rudolf Zajac, survived a vote of confidence called several weeks ago by opposition parties SMER and HZDS in response to popular discontent with his health reform package. Of 134 MPs present, 68 voted for recall, 24 voted against, 41 abstained and 1 did not vote. 76 votes, one-half plus one of all MPs, are required to recall a Minister.

¶4. (C) The biggest surprise of the new Ministerial appointments is Justice Minister Zitnanska. Former Justice Minister Daniel Lipsic issued a statement saying that KDH was aware she would be offered the post and that she had been encouraged to turn it down. Publicly Lipsic expressed disappointment in Zitnanska's decision to spurn the urging of the party that had nominated her to the post of State Secretary in 2002. Political analysts, however, told Poloffs

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they expect Lipsic is secretly happy to still have a friend and close contact in the top position at the Ministry.

¶5. (U) Direction (SMER), the largest opposition party and the consistent leader in public opinion polls, announced that they were shelving their motion to recall the Prime Minister (see Reftel), providing that the SDKU does not "violate the rules of democracy." It thus seems that Slovakia's government will remain in a state of relative stability through early elections, which are now scheduled for June 17 pending

Parliamentary approval on February 9.
VALLEE